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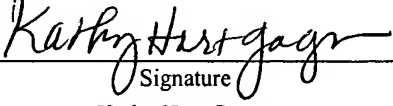
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: AgoulNIK *et al.*
Serial No: NYA
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Examiner: NYA.
Group Art Unit: NYA

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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

<p style="text-align: center;">Certificate of Express Mailing</p> <p>"Express Mail" label No.: <u>EV 314105049 US</u> Date of Deposit: July 8, 2004</p> <p>I certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as "<i>Express Mail Post Office to Addressee</i>" service under 37 C.F.R. 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to: Mail Stop: PCT, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> _____ Signature Kathy Hart Gagnon _____ Typed or Printed Name of person signing certificate</p>

July 8, 2004

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Prior to examination of the above-referenced application, Applicant respectfully requests entry of the following amendments in the above-referenced patent application:

Amendments to the Specification begin on page 2 of this paper.

Amendments to the Claims are reflected on page 4 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 28 of this paper.

Conclusions begin on page 29 of this paper.

This Amendment is believed to be in compliance with the Revised Amendment Format published in the Federal Register on June 30, 2003 (68 FR 38611), and therefore to be exempt from the requirements of 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(a)-(d).